



**International Conference on
Concerted Strategies to meet the Environmental
and Economic Challenges of the 21st Century**

*National Bank of Austria, Vienna,
Thursday 16th and Friday 17th April, 2009*

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Press Release

The Club of Rome convened a high-level conference of 35 experts from all over the world on 16th and 17th April in Vienna to clarify the underlying causes of the financial, economic, environmental and development crises facing the world community and to propose lines of action in response. Experts in three critical fields worked together to develop coherent strategies: to master the connected issues of climate, energy, ecosystems and water; financial system reform, economic restructuring and globalisation; and poverty and international development. The Conference was convened under the patronage of H.E. Dr. Heinz Fischer, Federal President of Austria who opened the discussions. With the support and participation of Prof. Dr. Ewald Nowotny, Governor of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank, it was held in its offices.

Among the participants were: Dr. Ashok Khosla and Dr. Eberhard von Koerber, Co-Presidents of the Club of Rome; the Rt. Hon Elliot Morley M.P, Adviser to the Prime Minister of the UK on Climate Change and Chairman of the Global Legislators Forum of the G8 + 5; Ambassador Dr. Mutsuyoshi Nishimura, Special Adviser to the Cabinet, Government of Japan; Dr. Mohan Munasinghe, Vice Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; Prof. Karl Aiginger, Director, Austrian Institute of Economic Research; Ambassador Bo Ekman, Chairman and Founder, the Tällberg Foundation; Mr. Walter Fust, Director General of the World Humanitarian Forum; Prof. Alexander Nekipelov, Vice President of the Russian Academy of Sciences; and Mr. Stewart Wallis, Executive Director, the New Economics Foundation; Ambassador Anders Wijkman, Rapporteur for Sustainable Development of the European Parliament; and Professor Jinfeng Zhou, Member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference;

Following the Vienna Conference, the Club will have the privilege of presenting its results and proposals directly to a group of 100 senior legislators who will meet in the Senate in Rome at the Annual General Meeting of the Global Legislators Forum in June 2009. The results can then, as appropriate, be conveyed to the meetings of the G8 and the G5 in Italy in July and also into the preparatory process for the Copenhagen Conference on a post-Kyoto Treaty in December.

The Club of Rome thus has the opportunity to convey independent, up-to-date scientific and analytical information directly to the legislators of major countries whose decisions are key to resolving the crises we face. This engagement with senior legislators should not only improve

the prospects for a good agreement on a post-Kyoto Treaty, but also for its subsequent ratification, financing and rapid implementation to avert the threats of accelerating climate change.

At this critical time in world affairs, the Conference considered the fundamental, systemic issues which will determine the future. The world faces an array of interconnected economic, environmental and development challenges: evidence from across the world demands that radical measures must be taken urgently to avert the risks of runaway climate change and ecosystems collapse.

The needs and aspirations of a growing world population are putting added demands on resources and the environment which are already under great stress. Immediate efforts will be needed if the present trends in population increase and rising living standards are not to have devastating and irreversible impacts on the poor and vulnerable and on the ecosystems and environment of the planet.

The underlying causes of the financial, economic, environmental and development crises are rooted in the concepts and strategies for economic growth which have driven the world economy for the past thirty years. These can and must change. A new path of economic and social progress must be adopted which is compatible with the environmental imperatives and limits of the planet. Respect for the conservation of the natural world, greater efficiency in the use of energy and resources, and a concern for fairness and inclusion of the most vulnerable are compatible with improved levels of wellbeing and security for rich and poor alike.

In this perspective, the financial crisis and the consequent economic slowdown provide an exceptional opportunity to restructure economic and financial systems so as to achieve new patterns of environmentally sound and equitable progress. Humanity has the resources and capabilities needed to salvage the future, if international action can be agreed upon and taken in time.

The Club of Rome is an independent, not-for-profit organization with an international membership. It draws on the insights and expertise of its members from all regions of the world, from different cultures and histories, from different fields of science and public policy and from academia, civil society and the corporate sector. Since its founding forty years ago, it has been promoting interdisciplinary analysis, dialogue and action on the fundamental systemic challenges which are determining the future of humanity (www.clubofrome.org).